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U.S. Patent Application of: Eric D. BERGMAN et al.

Application No.: 09/887,873
Filed: June 22, 2001

Group Art Unit: 2176
Examiner: William L. Bashore
Client: Sun Microsystems, Inc.

For: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ENTRY AND EDITING OF SPREADSHEET FORMULAS

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1. Transmittal Form (1 page)
2. Amendment After Final (23 pages)
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Dated: September 29, 2005
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A. Wesley Ferrebee/laf

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RESPONSE UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
EXPEDITED PROCEDURE
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2176

Attorney Docket No. 30014200-1055

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:	)	Group Art Unit: 2176
Eric D. BERGMAN et al.	)	Examiner: Bashore, William L.
Application No. 09/887,873	)	
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For: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ENTRY AND EDITING OF SPREADSHEET FORMULAS	)	

MAIL STOP AF
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

AMENDMENT AFTER FINAL

Dear Sir:

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, this Amendment is submitted in response to the Final Office Action mailed June 29, 2005. Applicants respectfully request entry of the proposed amendment, and reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims.

IN THE SPECIFICATION

On page 11, beginning on line 11, please amend the paragraph as follows:

In one embodiment of the present invention, ~~a Determiner 740 in Fig. 7 allows~~ a user is able to complete editing a formula by selecting another cell. If the user selects another cell while editing a formula, ~~the Determiner 740 in Fig. 7~~ it is determined determines whether entering a reference to the cell at that point in the formula is appropriate. If entering a reference to the cell at that point in the formula is inappropriate, ~~the Determiner 740 terminates~~ formula editing is terminated and ~~identifies~~ the selected cell becomes ~~as~~ the active cell. Thus, ~~the Determiner 740 allows~~ a user can ~~to~~ edit a series of formulas in a series of cells without explicitly terminating formula editing for each cell. If N formulas are edited, the ~~Determiner 740~~ embodiment enables ~~a user~~ to edit the formulas with N-1 fewer actions than prior art methods.

On page 11, beginning on line 20, please amend the paragraph as follows:

Figure 2 illustrates a spreadsheet running on a PDA in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention. The PDA 200 displays a portion of a spreadsheet 210. Rows 1 through 6 220 columns A through I 230 are displayed. Cell A4 240 is selected, and contains the formula 250 "=A2*B2". Adding another cell reference into the formula as it is would not be appropriate ~~as discussed in further detail below~~. Thus, if the user selects cell D4 260, ~~the Determiner 740 identifies~~ cell D4 will become ~~as~~ the active cell. Additionally, the formula "=A2*B2" ~~is~~ will be entered ~~by the Determiner 740~~ as the contents of cell A4. However, if the user enters an operator, for example "+", so that the formula is "=A2*B2+" and the user, then, selects cell D4, a reference to cell D4 is entered into the formula ~~250 by the Determiner 740 such that the formula~~ which becomes "A2*B2+D4".

On page 12, beginning on line 15, please amend the paragraph as follows:

At operation 305, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether the cell contains a formula. If the cell contains a formula, at operation 310, ~~the Determiner 740 initiates~~ formula editing is initiated and the process continues ~~processing~~ at operation 325. If the cell does not contain a formula, at operation 315, ~~the Determiner 740~~ it is determined ~~determines~~ whether the user inputs an explicit formula initiator (e.g., an "=" sign). If the user does not input an explicit formula initiator, at operation 320, ~~the Determiner 740 identifies that~~ the user ~~is entering~~ enters non-formula data. If the user does input an explicit formula initiator, ~~the Determiner 740 continues processing~~ process continues at operation 310.

On page 12, the paragraph beginning on line 22, please amend as follows:

At operation 325, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether the user selects another cell. The user may select another cell using a keyboard, pointing device or touch-sensitive display, similar to the means used to active a cell in operation 300. If the user selects another cell, at operation 330, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether it is appropriate to insert a reference to the cell in the formula. Formulas typically have a ~~predetermined~~ syntax which must be followed. Thus, if the ~~predetermined~~ syntax allows a cell reference in the active portion of the formula, ~~the Determiner 740 identifies that~~ inserting a reference to the cell is appropriate ~~or conforms to the predetermined syntax.~~ If the ~~predetermined~~ syntax does not allow a cell reference in the active portion of the formula, ~~the Determiner 740 identifies that~~ inserting a reference to the cell is not appropriate ~~or does not conform to the predetermined syntax~~.

On page 13, beginning on line 4, please amend the paragraph as follows:

If it is not appropriate to insert a reference to the cell in the formula, at operation 335, formula editing is terminated ~~by the Determiner 740~~. At operation 340, ~~the Determiner 740 stores~~ the formula is stored as the contents of the active cell. At operation 345, the selected cell is activated ~~by the Determiner 740~~.

On page 13, beginning on line 8, please amend the paragraph as follows:

If it is appropriate to insert a reference to the cell in the formula, at operation 350, a reference to the cell is added to the formula ~~by the Determiner 740~~ and the process repeats at operation 325. If at operation 325 the user does not select another cell, at operation 355, it is determined ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ whether the user explicitly terminates formula editing. The user may explicitly terminate formula editing by selecting a terminator button (e.g., a check mark button or an equals button). In embodiments where data may be entered through a keyboard, the user may also explicitly terminate formula editing by inputting a return or other termination indicator.

On page 13, beginning on line 16, please amend the paragraph as follows:

If the user explicitly terminates formula editing, at operation 360, formula editing is terminated ~~by the Determiner 740~~. At operation 365, ~~the Determiner 740 stores~~ the formula is stored as the contents of the active cell. If the user does not explicitly terminate formula editing, at operation 730, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ whether the user inputs other data. Text, numbers, functions and operators are examples of other data the user may input. If the user inputs other data, at operation 375, the data is added to the formula ~~by the Determiner 740~~ and the process continues at operation 325. If the user does not input other data, the process continues at operation 325.

On page 13, beginning on line 26, please amend the paragraph as follows:

In one embodiment, the determination of whether selecting a cell terminates formula editing is based on ~~a predetermined~~ formula syntax and the current context of the function. Functions are entered according to ~~the predetermined~~ a syntax. For example, a ~~predetermined~~ formula syntax may specify that "Polish notation" be used. The syntax for addition using Polish notation requires an addition operator, "+", followed by two arguments. The arguments may be references to cells.

On page 14, beginning on line 5, please amend the paragraph as follows:

Thus, a formula adding cell A4 to cell B2 is entered as "=+A4 B2". After the "=" and "+" are entered, ~~the Determiner 740 allows~~ it a reference to a cell ~~to be entered~~ is allowed according to the syntax. ~~In this implementation~~ Thus, selecting cell A4 will enter a reference to cell A4 into the formula. Then, ~~based on~~ the ~~Polish notation~~ syntax, ~~the Determiner 740~~ still allows another cell reference ~~to be entered~~. Thus, selecting cell B2 will ~~cause the Determiner 740 to~~ enter a reference to cell B2 into the formula. However, at this point, the ~~Polish notation~~ syntax does not allow another cell reference to be entered. Thus, if a user selects another cell, ~~the Determiner 740 stores~~ the formula "=+A4 B2" is stored in the old cell and ~~identifies~~ the selected cell ~~as~~ is activated.

On page 14, beginning on line 13, please amend the paragraph as follows:

Using a different ~~predetermined~~ syntax, the addition operator, "+", is preceded and succeeded by arguments which may be references to cells. Thus, the above formula becomes "=A4 + B2". Therefore, after B2 is selected, immediately selecting another cell will ~~cause the Determiner 740 to~~ terminate editing of the formula and activate the selected cell.

On page 15, beginning on line 21, please amend the paragraph as follows:

Adding another cell reference into the formula ~~450~~ as it is in Figure 4 would not be appropriate ~~as discussed in further detail below~~. Thus, if the user selects cell D4 740, ~~the Determiner 740 identifies~~ cell C4 ~~will become~~ ~~as~~ the active cell. Additionally, the formula "=a2*b2" ~~is~~ will be entered ~~by the Determiner 740~~ as the contents of cell A4 and the formula toolbar is closed. However, if the user enters an operator, for example, "+", so that the formula is "=a2*b2+" and the user, then, selects cell D4, a reference to cell D4 is entered into the formula ~~450 by the Determiner 740 such that the formula 450~~ which becomes "=a2*b2+d4".

On page 16, beginning on line 12, please amend the paragraph as follows:

At operation 505, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether the cell contains a formula. If the cell contains a formula, at operation 510, ~~the Determiner 740 initiates formula editing~~ is initiated and the process continues ~~processing~~ at operation 525. If the cell does not contain a formula, at operation 515, it is determined ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ whether the user inputs an explicit formula initiator (e.g., an "=" sign). If the user does not input an explicit formula initiator, at operation 520, ~~the Determiner 740 identifies that~~ the user ~~is entering~~ enters non-formula data. If the user does input an explicit formula initiator, the ~~Determiner 740 continues processing~~ process continues at operation 510.

On page 16, beginning at line 19, please amend the paragraph as follows:

At operation 525, the formula toolbar is displayed. At operation 530, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether the user selects another cell. The user may select another cell using a keyboard, pointing device or touch-sensitive display, similar to the means used to activate a cell in operation 500. If the user selects another cell, at operation 535, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether it is appropriate to insert a reference to the cell in the

formula. Formulas typically have a ~~predetermined~~ syntax which must be followed. Thus, if the ~~predetermined~~ syntax allows a cell reference in the active portion of the formula, inserting a reference to the cell is appropriate ~~or conforms to the predetermined syntax~~. If the ~~predetermined~~ syntax does not allow a cell reference in the active portion of the formula, ~~the Determiner 740 identifies that~~ inserting a reference to the cell is not appropriate.

On page 17, beginning at line 1, please amend the paragraph as follows:

If it is not appropriate to insert a reference to the cell in the formula, at operation 540, formula editing is terminated ~~by the Determiner 740~~. At operation 545, ~~the Determiner 740 stores~~ the formula is stored as the contents of the active cell. At operation 550, the formula toolbar is closed. At operation 555, the selected cell is activated ~~by the Determiner 740~~.

On page 17, beginning at line 7, please amend the paragraph as follows:

If it is not appropriate to insert a reference to the cell in the formula, at operation 560, a reference to the cell is added to the formula ~~by the Determiner 740~~ and the process repeats at operation 530. If at operation 530 the user does not select another cell, at operation 565, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether the user explicitly terminated formula editing. The user may explicitly terminate formula editing by selecting a terminator button (e.g., a check mark button or an equals button). The user may also explicitly terminate formula editing by inputting a terminator by other standard means (e.g., entering a return using a keyboard, drawing an "=" glyph or drawing another terminator glyph).

On page 17, beginning at line 16, please amend the paragraph as follows:

If the user explicitly terminates formula editing, at operation 570, formula editing is terminated ~~by the Determiner 740.~~ At operation 575, ~~the Determiner 740 stores~~ the formula is stored as the contents of the active cell. At operation 580, the formula toolbar is closed. If the

user does not explicitly terminate formula editing, at operation 585, ~~the Determiner 740 determines~~ it is determined whether the user inputs other data. Text, numbers, functions and operators are examples of other data the user may input. The user may enter functions and operators by selecting corresponding buttons on the formula toolbar. The user may also enter functions and operators using the traditional glyph method of entry. If the user inputs other data, at operation 590, the data is added to the formula ~~by the Determiner 740~~ and the process continues at operation 530. If the user does not input other data, the process continues at operation 530.

On page 18, beginning at line 23, please amend the paragraph as follows:

Next, a second cell 720 is selected based on user input using a selection device 730, which might include a keyboard, pointing device or touch-sensitive display, for instance. A determiner ~~Determiner~~ 740 is used to determine whether it is appropriate to insert a reference to the second cell in the formula. The ~~determiner~~ Determiner ~~740~~ might comprise a computer program or other logic within the computing device.

On page 19, beginning at line 10, please amend the paragraph as follows:

An embodiment of the invention can be implemented as computer software ~~(e.g. Determiner 740 in Fig. 7)~~ in the form of computer readable program code executed in a general purpose computing environment such as environment 600 illustrated in Figure 6, or in the form of bytecode class files executable within a Java™ run time environment running in such an environment, or in the form of bytecodes running on a processor (or devices enabled to process bytecodes) existing in a distributed environment (e.g., one or more processors on a network), or in the form of bytecodes running on a PDA. A keyboard 610 and mouse 611 are coupled to a system bus 618. The keyboard and mouse are for introducing user input to the computer system

and communicating that user input to central processing unit (CPU) 613. Other suitable input devices, a touch-sensitive display for example, may be used in addition to, or in place of, the mouse 611 and keyboard 610. I/O (input/output) unit 619 coupled to bi-directional system bus 618 represents such I/O elements as a printer, A/V (audio/video) I/O, etc.

On page 21, beginning on line 21, please amend the paragraph as follows:

In one embodiment of the invention, the processor 613 is a SPARC microprocessor from Sun Microsystems, Inc., a microprocessor manufactured by Motorola, such as the 680X0 processor, a microprocessor manufactured for use in a PDA, or a microprocessor manufactured by Intel, such as the 80X86 or Pentium processor. However, any other suitable microprocessor or microcomputer may be utilized. Main memory 615 is comprised of dynamic random access memory (DRAM), and bytecodes ~~(e.g., Determiner 740)~~ for one embodiment of the invention is stored in a portion 627 of main memory 615 during program execution. Video memory 614 is a dual-ported video random access memory. One port of the video memory 614 is coupled to video amplifier 616. The video amplifier 616 is used to drive the cathode ray tube (CRT) raster monitor 617. Video amplifier 616 is well known in the art and may be implemented by any suitable apparatus. This circuitry converts pixel data stored in video memory 614 to a raster signal suitable for use by monitor 617. Monitor 617 is a type of monitor suitable for displaying graphic images.

On page 22, beginning on line 20, please amend the paragraph as follows:

Application code, ~~such as Determiner 740,~~ may be embodied in any form of computer program product. A computer program product comprises a medium configured to store or transport computer readable code, or in which computer readable code may be embedded. Some

examples of computer program products are CD-ROM disks, ROM cards, floppy disks, magnetic tapes, computer hard drives, servers on a network, and carrier waves.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please substitute claims 1-39 with the following:

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable method ~~in a computer system~~ for editing a spreadsheet formula, the method comprising:

activating a first cell;

selecting a second cell in response to user input;

determining automatically by a computer whether a reference to said second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in said first cell;

when it is determined that the reference to said second cell conforms to the predetermined syntax,

storing said formula in said first cell; and

activating said second cell.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

displaying a formula toolbar when said formula is edited.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising:

closing said formula toolbar when said formula is no longer being edited.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein said formula toolbar comprises:

at least one mathematical operator.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2 wherein said formula toolbar comprises:

at least one function operator.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 further comprising:

displaying a function dialogue when said function operator is selected.

7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

entering said reference in said formula in response to determining that said reference conforms to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said first cell.

8. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable method ~~in a computer system~~ for formula editing, the method comprising:

selecting a cell;

determining automatically by a computer whether a reference to said cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in another selected cell; and

when it is determined that the reference to said cell conforms to the predetermined syntax for entry into the formula, entering an editing mode for said other selected cell.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein said entering comprises: displaying a formula toolbar.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8 further comprising:

entering the editing mode in response to a user inputting a formula initiator.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10 wherein said entering comprises: displaying a formula toolbar.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable method for formula entry, comprising:

activating a formula entry area;

obtaining an input from a user;

determining automatically by a computer whether said input conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in said formula entry area; and

storing a current formula in said formula entry area in response to determining that said input conforms to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein said formula is a search query.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable spreadsheet formula editor, comprising:

a first activation device configured to activate a first cell;

a selection device configured to select a second cell in response to user input;

a determiner configured to determine whether a reference to said second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in said first cell, wherein the determiner is embodied in a computing device;

a storage unit configured to store a current formula in said first cell in response to said determiner determining that said reference to said second cell does not conform to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said first cell; and

a first activation device configured to activate said second cell in response to said determiner determining that said reference to said second cell does not conform to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said first cell.

15. (Original) The spreadsheet formula editor of claim 14 further comprising: a formula toolbar wherein said formula toolbar is displayed when said formula is edited.

16. (Original) The spreadsheet formula editor of claim 15 wherein said formula toolbar is closed when said formula is no longer being edited.

17. (Original) The spreadsheet formula editor of claim 15 wherein said formula toolbar comprises: at least one mathematical operator.

18. (Original) The spreadsheet formula editor of claim 15 wherein said formula toolbar comprises: at least one function operator.

19. (Original) The spreadsheet formula editor of claim 18 further comprising: a function dialogue wherein said function dialogue is displayed when said function operator is selected.

20. (Previously Presented) The spreadsheet formula editor of claim 14, wherein said reference is entered in said formula in response to said determiner determining that said

reference to said second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said first cell.

21. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable formula editor, comprising:

a selection device configured to select a cell;

a determiner device operatively configured to determine whether a reference to said cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in another selected cell, wherein the determiner is embodied in a computing device; and

an editing mode configured to be entered when it is determined that the reference to said cell conforms to the predetermined syntax for entry into the formula.

22. (Original) The formula editor of claim 21 wherein said mode selector comprises: a display unit configured to display a formula toolbar.

23. (Previously Presented) The formula editor of claim 21, wherein said editing mode is configured to be entered in response to a user inputting a formula initiator.

24. (Original) The formula editor of claim 23 wherein said second mode selector comprises: a display unit configured to display a formula toolbar.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer-executable formula editor comprising:

an activation device configured to activate a formula entry area;

an input device operatively configured to receive an input from a user;

a determiner configured to determine whether said input conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in said formula entry area, wherein the determiner is embodied in a computing device; and

a storage unit configured to store a current formula in said formula entry area in response to said determiner determining that said reference to said second cell does not conform to a predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said formula entry area.

26. (Original) The formula editor of claim 25 wherein said formula is a search query.

27. (Currently Amended) A tangible computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein configured to edit a spreadsheet formula, said computer program product comprising:

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to activate a first cell;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to select a second cell in response to user input;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to determine whether a reference to said second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in said first cell;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to store a current formula in said first cell when it is determined that the reference to said second cell does not conform to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said first cell; and

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to activate said second cell when it is determined that the reference to said second cell does not conform to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said first cell.

28. (Original) The computer program product of claim 27 further comprising: computer readable code configured to cause a computer to display a formula toolbar when said formula is edited.

29. (Original) The computer program product of claim 28 further comprising: computer readable code configured to cause a computer to close said formula toolbar when said formula is no longer being edited.

30. (Original) The computer program product of claim 28 wherein said toolbar comprises: at least one mathematical operator.

31. (Original) The computer program product of claim 28 wherein said toolbar comprises: at least one function operator.

32. (Original) The computer program product of claim 31 further comprising: computer readable code configured to cause a computer to display a function dialogue when said function operator is selected.

33. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 27, further comprising:

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to enter said reference in said formula when it is determined that said reference conforms to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said first cell.

34. (Currently Amended) A tangible computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein configured to edit a formula, said computer program product comprising:

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to select a cell;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to determine whether a reference to said cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in another selected cell; and

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to enter an editing mode when it is determined that the reference to said cell conforms to the predetermined syntax for entry into the formula.

35. (Original) The computer program product of claim 34 wherein said computer readable code configured to cause a computer to enter comprises: computer readable code configured to cause a computer to display a formula toolbar.

36. (Previously Presented) The computer program product of claim 34, further comprising computer readable code configured to cause a computer to enter the editing mode in response to a user inputting a formula initiator.

37. (Original) The computer program product of claim 36 wherein said computer readable code configured to cause a computer to enter an editing mode, if a user inputs a formula initiator comprises: computer readable code configured to cause a computer to display a formula toolbar.

38. (Currently Amended) A tangible computer program product comprising:

a computer usable medium having computer readable program code embodied therein configured to edit a formula, said computer program product comprising:

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to activate a formula entry area;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to obtain an input from a user;

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to determine whether said input conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said formula entry area; and

computer readable code configured to cause a computer to store a current formula in said formula entry area in response to determining that said input does not conform to the predetermined syntax for entry into said formula in said formula entry area.

39. (Original) The computer program product of claim 38 wherein said formula is a search query.

REMARKS

In response to the Official Action mailed June 29, 2005, Applicants propose to amend their application and respectfully request reconsideration. In this Amendment, no claims are added or canceled so that claims 1-39 remain at issue. Applicants have proposed amendments to the specification and claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34, and 38 that put the application in form for allowance. No new matter has been added.

I. Objection To Specification

The Examiner objects to Applicants' Amendment of April 4, 2005, under 35 U.S.C. § 132(a) as allegedly introducing new matter. Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's objection is moot in view of Applicants' proposed amendments, which cancel the alleged new matter added in pp. 2-11 of the Amendment filed April 4, 2005.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 101 Non-Subject Matter Rejection of Claims

Claims 1-13 and 27-39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as purportedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner contends that claims 1, 8, and 12 can be interpreted as a series of mental steps. Though Applicants disagree, claims 1, 8, and 12 are amended to recite a "computer-executable method" as suggested by the Examiner, in order to advance prosecution.

Regarding independent claims 27, 34, and 38, the Examiner contends that those claims are directed to non-statutory matter because "computer program product," as recited in those claims, may be construed in light of the specification to include an intangible carrier wave. Though Applicants disagree with the Examiner's contention, Applicants have proposed to amend claims 27, 34, and 38 to recite "tangible computer program product." As such, the term "computer program product" cannot be construed to encompass an allegedly intangible

embodiment, thus rendering the rejection moot. Accordingly, the rejection of dependent claims 28-33, 35-37, and 39 are also rendered moot.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 102 Anticipation Rejection of Claims

The Examiner rejected claims 1-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) based upon a public use or sale of the invention by *Microsoft Excel 2000* (hereinafter "*Excel 2000*") copyrighted by the Microsoft Corporation in 1999. That rejection is respectfully traversed.

In the Amendment of April 4, 2005, Applicants argued that *Excel 2000* requires action by the user to make formula syntax determinations. The Examiner now argues that the term "determiner" may be construed as a user, such as described in *Excel 2000*, using the broadest possible interpretation of the claims. (See Official Action, p. 9). Applicants propose to amend independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, and 25 to clarify that the determination step is performed by the computer, and that the determiner is embodied in a computing device (See Original Application, p. 18, ll. 26-27). In *Excel 2000*, after a user activates a cell and then selects a second cell, *Excel 2000* does not determine whether a reference to the second cell conforms to a predetermined syntax for entry into a formula in the first cell as recited by claim 1, for example. Instead, *Excel 2000* requires the user to explicitly terminate editing of the formula in the first cell by selecting a termination button (*e.g.*, See "X" box on p. 4 of *Excel 2000* Figures). Thus, *Excel 2000* cannot be construed as teaching the computer or computing device recited in claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, and 25.

With respect to claims 27, 34, and 38, the rejection is wholly erroneous. The Examiner concedes that the determination of predetermined syntax is made by the user of the program (See Official Action, p. 4). Yet, claims 27, 34, and 38 recite "computer readable code configured to cause a computer to determine whether a reference... conforms to a predetermined syntax..."

Clearly, the recited "computer readable code" cannot be construed to encompass a user of *Excel 2000* (*i.e.*, a human being). Thus, claims 27, 34, and 38 are already allowable in view of the cited art. Prompt allowance of claims 27, 34, and 38 is therefore respectfully requested, as no further consideration of these claims is necessary.

Furthermore, the Examiner asserts in the *Response to Arguments* that "Excel 2000 provides built in auditing tools for automatically determining data conformity, etc." Applicants note that the Examiner does not rely on this argument in the rejection of claims 1-39, nor does the Examiner provide support for this assertion. Applicants find no evidence of this assertion in *Excel 2000* and therefore request an explanation should this contention be relied upon in any future rejection of the claims.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that *Excel 2000* does not teach all the limitations of independent claims 1, 8, 12, 14, 21, 25, 27, 34, and 38, and respectfully requests that the rejection to these claims be withdrawn.

Claims 2-7 depend from claim 1. Claims 9-11 depend from claim 8. Claim 13 depends from claim 12. Claims 15-20 depend from base claim 14. Claims 22-24 depend from base claim 21. Claim 26 depends from base claim 25. Claims 28-33 depend from base claim 27. Claims 35-37 depend from base claim 34. Claim 39 depends from base claim 38. Thus, each dependent claim should be deemed allowable for at least the same reasons as the base claim from which it depends.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that all claims are allowable over the cited prior art, and respectfully requests early and favorable notification to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: September 29, 2005 By: _____

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